



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Water Department

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CONTACT:

Ruby Enriquez

(619) 232-2112

ruby@collaborativeservices.biz

San Diego's a City of Water Conservation Volunteers

By Luis Generoso, Water Resources Manager

SAN DIEGO - Conserving water is more than just a passing thought for San Diegans, it is a way of life. Although water surrounds San Diego's beaches and bays, it has a semi-arid climate and averages only nine inches of rain annually. Since rainfall is not enough to accommodate the city's needs, conserving water is vital. For more than a decade San Diegans have been volunteering to save this precious resource.

"The willingness of San Diegans to conserve water has been key to meeting our goals," says Chris Robbins, Supervising Management Analyst for the City of San Diego's Water Conservation Program. "Entrusting the community to voluntarily conserve water has worked during drought seasons and recent experience has shown that it also works during non-drought years as well."

The Water Conservation Program supports everybody conserving water voluntarily by providing information about water-wise habits and encouraging the installation of low water-use devices. The Program also offers many services that are designed to successfully function solely on the voluntary efforts of local residents and businesses. For instance, more than 3,420 vouchers redeemed by people voluntarily participating in programs like the High-Efficiency Clothes Washer (HEW) Voucher Program has resulted in more than 17 million gallons of water saved each year. Another voluntary resource, the online Landscape Watering Calculator, has attracted more than 31,000 residents. More than 8,100 of those residents have created watering schedules – saving an estimated 480,000 gallons of water per day.

Volunteering to save water not only comes from individuals, but also from a diverse range of community partners. The Water Conservation Program is also working with various local and regional industry groups and professional organizations to help inform the public and provide tips on how to conserve water both at home and at work.

"We are always looking for ways we can educate our clients as well as ourselves about water conservation," Rob McGann, Vice President of the San Diego chapter of the California Landscape Contractors Association. "We were more than happy to lend a helping hand by

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providing a link to the City's Landscape Watering Calculator on our industry website as an additional resource for landscape maintenance, and so far it is a hit."

Why not join the thousands of San Diegans who have already volunteered to conserve water? Here are some easy tips for how you can get started:

- ◆ Keep a jug or pitcher of water in the refrigerator to fill your glass, instead of letting the water run down the sink when you want a cool drink.
- ◆ Collect water used from rinsing produce, and reuse it to water houseplants.
- ◆ Defrost frozen food by placing it in the refrigerator overnight or using a microwave, instead of putting it under running hot water.
- ◆ If you have a fish tank that needs to be cleaned out, use its water as a fertilizer treatment on your houseplants because it is rich in nitrogen and phosphorous.
- ◆ Use a trigger nozzle when washing the car to prevent the hose from running additional water, or take your car to a carwash that uses recycled water.
- ◆ Bathe pets outdoors in a landscaped area so that you maximize water usage by also watering your grassy lawn.
- ◆ Set lawn mower blades one notch higher, since longer grass reduces evaporation.
- ◆ Prevent over-watering your lawn and garden by creating a free customized watering schedule with the online Landscape Watering Calculator available at www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation.
- ◆ Request a free on-site evaluation of your indoor and outdoor home water use, complete with recommendations, by calling the City of San Diego Water Department's Residential Water Survey Program at (619) 515-3500 or email water@sandiego.gov.

Limited rain showers haven't stopped San Diegans from pitching in to make the most of our local water supply. We encourage everybody to join in, and to tell others about conserving water. Because when it comes to saving water, San Diego is a city full of volunteers.

The Water Conservation Program reduces water demand through promoting or providing incentives for the installation of hardware that provides permanent water savings, and by providing services and information to help San Diegans make better decisions about water use. For more information about Water Conservation, visit www.sandiego.gov/water or call 619.515.3500.